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ABSTRACT

Findings of this staff report provide a picture of the conditions in which American children and families are living in the 1980s and offer a basis for projecting families' needs in the future. While the findings are not definitive, they reflect consistent themes which have emerged from both the personal testimony presented by parents and children in Select Committee hearings, and the evidence presented by prominent scholars and practitioners. Highlighted are trends in economic security, poverty, child care, housing, education, health, and child welfare. These trends suggest disturbing realities for many of America's children and families. During the 1980s, millions of American families have fallen behind. The number of children in poverty continues to grow, with children replacing older persons as America's poorest age group. The number of non-elderly persons without health insurance, one-third of whom are children, has increased dramatically over the past decade. Many families, especially young ones, are finding it increasingly difficult to house and educate their children, pay for child care, save for the future, and care for dependent parents. Full-time employment, even of both parents, often is not enough to keep families out of poverty. (RH)

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100th Congress
2nd Session

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CHILDREN AND FAMILIES: KEY TRENDS IN THE 1980s

A STAFF REPORT
OF THE
SELECT COMMITTEE ON CHILDREN, YOUTH, AND FAMILIES
ONE HUNDREDTH CONGRESS
SECOND SESSION

DECEMBER 1988

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LETTER OF TRANSMITTAL

DECEMBER 1988.

To: Members, Select Committee on Children, Youth, and Families

I commend to your attention this staff report, "Children and Families: Key Trends in the 1980s."

This report, which was prepared at my request, continues our annual effort to highlight significant demographic, economic and social trends which the Select Committee on Children, Youth, and Families' hearings and investigations have brought to light. These findings provide a picture of the conditions in which American children and families are living in the 1980s and offer a basis for projecting their needs in the upcoming decades.

This document will prove a valuable reference and resource to the Committee as it continues to monitor closely the changing circumstances of American families and to seek opportunities to improve policies on their behalf.

Respectfully submitted.

Sincerely,

GEORGE MILLER,
Chairman.

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INTRODUCTION

Beginning in 1983, the Select Committee on Children, Youth, and Families began an assessment of the conditions in which American children and their families live. Over the past six years, our hearings, investigations, and reports have documented the profound social, demographic, and economic changes that have transformed America's families.

This report is a compilation of striking findings gleaned from Select Committee investigations on how children and families have fared over the past decade. These findings highlight important trends in economic security, poverty, child care, housing, education, health, and child welfare that can serve as a baseline for understanding the challenges children and families in America face in the 1990s.

These trends suggest disturbing realities for many of America's children and families. During the 1980s, despite their best efforts, millions of American families have fallen behind. The number of children in poverty continues to grow, with children replacing older persons as America's poorest age group. The number of non-elderly persons without health insurance -- one third of whom are children -- has increased dramatically over the past decade. Many families, especially young families, are finding it increasingly difficult to house and educate their children, pay for child care, save for the future, and care for their dependent parents. And, increasingly, full-time employment -- even of both parents -- is not enough to keep families and their children out of poverty.

While the findings in this report are not definitive, they reflect consistent themes which have emerged from the personal testimony of parents and children, as well as the evidence presented by prominent scholars and practitioners. Difficult circumstances demand creative solutions from the various institutions that affect families including school, work, government, and the families themselves. We hope that this report will further enhance our ability to formulate intelligent policies for children and families in the years ahead.

ECONOMIC SECURITY

ECONOMIC PRESSURES ON FAMILIES MOUNT;

YOUNG FAMILIES AT RISK

In the decades following World War II, this nation experienced unparalleled economic expansion, and family living standards rose dramatically. Since 1973, the growth in real family income has slowed, increasing the economic burdens on American families with children.

- Income inequality hit record levels between 1979-1986: median adjusted income for the bottom two-fifths of all families fell 2%, while median adjusted income for the top two-fifths of all families rose 10%. (CBO, 1988)

- Between 1980-1986, families with children made no gains in real median income despite a 16% increase in the number of working mothers. Between 1970-1986, the real median income of families with children with a family head under age 25 dropped by 43%. (Census, 1986; CBO, 1988)

- The minimum wage, in real terms, has declined 33% since 1981. In 1988, a full-time minimum wage worker with two children will earn $2,500 less than the poverty level. (Levitan and Shapiro, 1987)

- In 1985, the level of household debt relative to disposable income reached a postwar high of 88%. (Polin, 1986)

MORE MOTHERS WORK OUT OF ECONOMIC NECESSITY

Employment trends over the last decade indicate that families now rely on having both parents in the work force to maintain family living standards. Between 1973 and 1984, the loss in real family income would have been three times as great if mothers had not gone to work.

- In March 1988, 65% of all women with children under 18, 73.3% of mothers with school-age children 6-17, 56.1% of women with preschool children, and 51.1% of mothers with infants under age 1 were in the labor force. The number of working mothers has increased by nearly half since 1975. (BLS, 1988)

- Nearly 60% of working mothers with preschool children are married to men earning less than $25,000. On average, in married couple families with children, working mothers contribute 41.3% to total family earnings. (BLS, 1987)

- Married women with children whose husbands' earnings are low or moderate are more likely to work outside the home than married mothers whose husbands have higher earnings. Sixty-eight percent of mothers with children under age 18 whose husbands earn $15,000 to $19,000 are in the work force, compared with only 53% of mothers whose husbands earn over $50,000. (BLS, 1988)

CHILD CARE, ELDER CARE COSTS

MAJOR FAMILY EXPENSE

Working families incur costs that do not show up in consumer expenditure surveys. A major item in family budgets today is child care. Families with elder dependents lose income when one parent must leave the work force to care for a sick parent.

- Families spend $11.5 billion on child care a year, an average of $3,000 per child for full-time care. Child care costs consume 10% of available family income and up to 26% of low-income family income. (Census, 1987; CYF, 1987)

- Nine percent of all caregivers (12% of caregiving daughters) report they have left the labor force to care for a disabled relative or friend. In one California survey, 22% had quit their jobs, losing an estimated $20,400 each in annual income. (Stone, Cafferata, and Sangl, 1987; Family Survival Project, 1988)

- Nationally, men and women who do not have the right to return to their jobs after caring for a newborn or adopted child lose $607 million annually. (Institute for Women's Policy Research, 1988)

AFFORDABLE HOUSING LOSES GROUND

The American dream of owning a home is increasingly out of reach for families with children. Construction of new housing is no longer focused on first homes, but on second homes and luxury dwellings. More and more, the housing market -- even for older homes -- is dominated not by families looking for first homes, but by families who already own their homes. For lower-income families, higher rents have placed them at risk, creating a new class of "near homeless" families.

- From 1973-1987, home ownership rates for young married couple families dropped from 38.9% to 29.1%; for single parent families, rates declined from 13.7% to 6.3%. (JCHS, 1988)

- In 1985, an average down payment claimed 50% of a buyer's income, up from 33% in 1978. (MIT, 1986)

- For an average 30-year-old male in 1973, the median-priced home would have absorbed 21% of monthly pay; in 1984, that home absorbed 44% of monthly earnings. (JEC, 1985)

- The median rent burden increased from 20% of household income in 1970 to 29% in 1983. (MIT, 1986)

HEALTH CARE COSTS INCREASE;

ACCESS DECREASES

Unlike Western European countries and Canada where health insurance is guaranteed by the government, the United States ties health care benefits to employment. For increasing numbers of working families, health care benefits are unavailable. The fastest growing population without health insurance is children of working parents with employer-based health coverage.

- Between 1979-1986, the number of non-elderly persons without health insurance increased by 30%, from 28.4 million to 36.8 million. (CRS, 1988)

- Nearly 87% of uninsured children live in families with one or more workers. More than one-half of uninsured children live in families with a full-time, full-year worker. (EBRI, 1988)

- Today, health care costs consume 11% of the total U.S. GNP compared to 9% in 1980. By the year 2000, this proportion will grow to 15%. (HCFA, 1987)

- The average cost of a hospital stay in 1986 outstripped inflation by ten to one. Between 1981-1986, the percentage of surveyed companies whose medical plans pay all hospital room and board charges dropped from 85% to 38%. (Equicor-Equitable HCA Corporation; Hewitt Associates, 1987)

EDUCATION COSTS OUTPACE INFLATION;

MORE FAMILIES BORROW MONEY

By the year 2000, according to the Department of Labor, 75% of jobs will require some college education. Yet, for the eighth straight year, college costs have outstripped the rate of inflation. As a result, the U.S. is moving toward a two-tiered education system where children in higher-income families will be ready to meet these challenges, while children in lower-income families will be less prepared to obtain future jobs.

- Between 1979-1986, student loan volume grew from $3 billion to $8.6 billion while federal grants to students rose only slightly, from $2.4 billion to $3.6 billion. In real terms, federal grants to students declined by 38.6% between 1981-1986. (College Board, 1987; Mohrman, 1987)

- Between 1978-1983, college participation rates declined among students with family incomes under $20,000 (in 1983 dollars), while participation rates increased for students from families with incomes over $30,000. (Lee, 1986)

- Between 1980-1984, black students' enrollment in college declined by nearly 11% after steadily increasing during the 1970s. There are fewer black undergraduates today than there were a decade ago. (Mohrman, 1987)

POVERTY

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CHILDREN COMPRISE AMERICA'S POOREST AGE GROUP

The United States has a higher percentage of children in poverty than either Western Europe or Canada. In 1987, one out of five American children lived in poverty -- a 24% increase over 1979 -- compared to one out of nine adults.

- Three out of five poor children are white. (Census, 1988)
- One in every six white children is poor compared to more than one in every three Hispanic children and nearly one in every two black children. (Census, 1988)
- Twenty-five percent of today's preschool children will be poor in the year 2000. (CDF, 1987)
- In 1987, 16.4% of families with children were in poverty, up nearly 35% since 1979. Nearly one in every two female headed families with children lives in poverty compared to one in every twelve married couple families. (Census, 1988)
- Nearly one in every four rural children is poor. Since 1978, rural poverty rates have grown at twice the rate of poverty in urban areas. (Census, 1987)

WORKING POOR FAMILIES INCREASE;

POOR FAMILIES ARE GETTING POORER

For a growing number of families with children, getting a job is no longer a ticket out of poverty. In one out of every four poor urban families, and in two out of three rural families living in poverty, a parent is working. Despite the increased work efforts of poor families, income inequality in American is widening.

- Over half of all poor married couple families, and 40% of single mother families, worked in 1986. The number of working people in poverty grew by 36% between 1979-1986, from 6.5 million to 8.9 million. (Census, 1987)

- In two-thirds of rural poor families, one member is a full-time worker. In one-quarter of rural poor families, two members work full-time. (USDA, Economic Research Service, 1987)

- In 1987, two out of every five poor persons had incomes below half the federal poverty line -- the highest level in over a decade. (CBPP, 1987)

- In 1987, the income gap between the rich and the poor hit its widest point in 40 years. The wealthiest 40% of American families received 67.8% of national family income. The poorest 40% received only 15.4%, one of the lowest percentages ever recorded. (CBPP, 1988)

- In 1981, a family of three with a full-time minimum wage earner was $280 below the poverty line. In 1987, this family's earnings fell $2,100 below the poverty line. (CBPP, 1988)

HOMELESS AND HUNGRY FAMILIES

INCREASE IN THE EIGHTIES

Families with children are the fastest growing group of homeless in America, comprising one-third of the homeless in 1987. Thousands more are at-risk. Millions of Americans also experience hunger at some point each month.

- On any given night in America, 100,000 children (excluding runaways, throwaways, and abandoned children) have no home. (NAS, 1988)

- In 1987, the demand for emergency shelter for families in major cities across the U.S. jumped by 32% over 1986 levels. In New York City alone, the number of homeless families increased by 433% between 1982-1987, from 1,088 families to 5,100. (USCM, 1987)

- Estimates of the number of homeless persons in the U.S. range from 589,000 to 2.2 million. Homelessness is at its highest level since the Great Depression. (NAS, 1988)

- In 1986, nearly half of Americans seeking emergency food assistance in eight states and the District of Columbia reported having one or more children in their households. (The National Student Campaign Against Hunger, 1987)

- In 1987, the demand by families with children for emergency food assistance increased by 18% in 25 major U.S. cities. (USCM, 1987)

SAFETY NET PROGRAMS SHRINK FOR FAMILIES IN POVERTY

Among families with children, one-third of the increase in poverty since 1979 would not have occurred if government programs had as much impact today in removing families from poverty as they did in 1979.

- In 1986, only 60% of the children in poverty received AFDC (Aid to Families with Dependent Children) down from nearly 72% in 1979. During this same period, the real value of AFDC benefits declined by 18.5% for a family of four. (CDF, 1988; CBPP, 1987)

- Between 1981-1987, federal housing assistance declined by more than 70%. (CBPP, 1988)

- The Food Stamp program fails to reach 10-13 million Americans, or one-third of those who are eligible. Between 1981-1987, the Food Stamp budget fell, in real terms, by 35%. (President's Task Force on Hunger, 1986; CDF, 1988)

- The WIC (Women, Infants and Children) nutrition program for high-risk low-income women and children serves less than 50% of the eligible population. (CYF, 1987)

- Between fiscal years 1981-1987, 2.1 million eligible children were dropped from the National School Lunch Program. (USDA, 1987)

CHILD CARE

CHILD CARE INADEQUATE TO MEET DEMAND;

WAITING LISTS ARE THE NORM

The current supply of child care falls far short of both current and anticipated demand. When child care is unavailable, working families are forced to choose between foregoing necessary income or leaving their children in unsafe care.

- In 1984, at least 2.1 million school-age children were in self or non-adult care during non-school hours. (Census, 1987)

- A survey of public housing projects with child care centers found that half of all households with children would use the center if space were available, implying a "waiting list" of about 96,000 children. (Robins, 1987)

- A statewide survey of California licensed centers and family day care homes found 136,254 families waiting for a child care opening. (California Child Care Resource and Referral Network, 1987)

- In 1987, in New York State, an estimated 830,000 to 1.2 million preschool and school-age children needed child care compared with fewer than 135,000 licensed child care placements available statewide. (New York Commission on Children, 1987)

- As of January 1988, 6,885 child care slots in Missouri were state subsidized, but 1,246 children were on a waiting list. (Missouri Department of Social Services, 1988)

- As of April 1988, 27,000 children in Florida were on waiting lists for subsidized child care, including 8,500 infants and almost 3,000 school-age children. (Florida Department of Family Services, 1988)

LACK OF CHILD CARE A BARRIER TO EMPLOYMENT

Limited and unsatisfactory child care options impede work productivity and often prevent families who seek work from participating in the labor force.

- In 1985, nearly 455,000 parents reported lost time from work each month as a result of failed child care arrangements. (Census, 1987)
- Among mothers not in the labor force, 36% with annual family incomes less than $15,000 and 45% of single mothers said they would look for work if affordable child care were available. (Census, 1983)
- In a California survey of 1,200 parents, 25% of all unemployed parents, and 33% of unemployed single parents, reported that inadequate child care kept them from working or attending training programs. (California Governor's Task Force on Child Care, 1986)
- In a survey of over 4,000 AFDC families in Utah, over one-quarter needed child care in order to obtain employment. (Hoggan, 1987)
- Twenty-five percent of Detroit area mothers with preschool children surveyed in 1986 said they would seek employment or work more hours if they could find better or less costly child care. (Oppenheim-Mason, 1987)

FEDERAL CHILD CARE PROGRAMS REDUCED

IN THE 1980s

Working mothers are now the norm, yet federal policies have not responded to this new reality. During the 1980s, significant cuts in federal programs have resulted in fewer children served, less state involvement, and lost work opportunities for families.

- The Title XX Social Services Block Grant appropriation experienced an overall cut of 32%, after adjusting for inflation, since 1981. Twenty-eight states spent fewer Title XX funds for child care in 1987 than in 1981, when adjusted for inflation. Twenty-three states are serving fewer children now than they did six years ago. (CBPP, 1988; CDF, 1987)

- Eligibility restrictions imposed in 1981 upon low-income working families in the AFDC program resulted in significant cuts in federal outlays related to the AFDC child care disregard, used in the determination of benefit levels. These outlays dropped by almost 70%, from $120 million in FY 1980 to an estimated $40 million in FY 1988. (Kamerman, 1987; DOL, 1988)

HOUSING

MIDDLE INCOME FAMILIES STRUGGLE

TO AFFORD HOUSING

During the decade following World War II, the average American family could purchase a reasonably priced home. Today, affordable homes, especially for first-time home buyers, are increasingly unavailable to moderate and middle-income families.

- In 1985, an average down payment claimed 50% of a buyer's annual income, up from 33% in 1978. (MIT, 1986)

- From 1974-1983, homeowners' costs for mortgage, real estate taxes, insurance, fuel and utilities rose by 120%. This increase outpaced the 94% increase in homeowners' median income. (Hartman, 1987)

- In 1987, the median price of first homes approached $67,000 (in constant 1986 dollars), an increase of over 92% since 1975. (Apgar, 1988)

AFFORDING A HOME ESPECIALLY DIFFICULT

FOR YOUNG FAMILIES

Young families, who have endured the greatest income decline among all families over the last decade, have been especially hard hit by the crisis in housing affordability.

- The real income of young families with children (household heads under 25) was 43% lower in 1986 than that for comparable families in 1970. (CBO, 1988)

- From 1973-1987, home ownership rates for young married families with children decreased from 39% to 29% and for young single parent families, from 14% to 6%. During the same time period, the number of renter households with children grew more than four times faster than the rate for all households. (Apgar, 1988)

- Between 1974-1987, young households with children experienced a 50% increase in average rent burden. For young single parent families with children, rent burden increased from 46% to 81% of their income. (Apgar, 1988)

POOR FAMILIES' INCOME INADEQUATE

TO MEET HOUSING COSTS

Low-income families, who have always struggled to survive economically, are increasingly at risk of homelessness.

- An estimated one-half of the 15 million low-income families with children paid more than the generally recommended 30% of their incomes for housing. (CRS, 1987)

- In 1983, the median rent burden for households in the lowest income quintile had risen to 46% of income, up from 35% in 1974, and in 1983 over one-fourth of the households in this group had rent burdens above three-fourths of income. (JCHS, 1986)

- The average AFDC shelter allowance payment covers only 50% of average fair market rent. This ratio varies widely, from 64% in western states to only 26% in southern states. (Newman and Schnare, 1988)

SUPPLY OF LOW AND MODERATE INCOME

HOUSING UNITS DECREASING

Affordable housing for families is in critically short supply and shrinking every year.

- Between 1974-1983, the number of housing units renting for less than $300 a month (in constant 1986 dollars) dropped by nearly one million. (Apgar, 1988)

- Between 1983-1987, new homes selling for over $120,000 climbed from 17% to 40% of all new home sales. While the total number of new home sales grew by 10%, the number of homes which sold for less than $60,000 fell from 148,000 to only 61,000. In the Northeast, only 3,000 of the 117,000 new homes sold for less than $60,000. (Census, 1988)

- Nationwide, there are 4 million rental units at affordable prices for the 8 million low-income renters who need them. This shortfall is 120% larger than in 1980. (CDF, 1988)

HOUSING CRISIS RESULTS IN INADEQUATE HOUSING AND HOMELESSNESS

The housing crisis has resulted in unsafe or overcrowded living conditions for families, waiting lists for subsidized housing, and, increasingly, homelessness. Homelessness takes an emotional toll on families and has serious academic, health, and social consequences for children.

- In 1983, 7.7 million households lived in inadequate housing, including 3.5 million families with children; 6% of all metropolitan housing and 17% of non-metropolitan housing fail to meet U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) basic standards of housing adequacy. (Urban Institute, 1988; Apgar, 1988)

- In many cities, families compose over 50% of the homeless population. Most homeless families are headed by women with two or three children under the age of 5. In rural areas, the majority of homeless families are headed by two parents. (USCM, 1987; NAS, 1988)

- A majority of homeless families report that they previously lived with relatives or friends in overcrowded apartments. Out of 174,000 public housing units in New York City alone, as many as 50,000 are illegally occupied by more than one family, up from 17,000 two years earlier. (NAS, 1988; Hartman, 1988)

- Illnesses such as anemia, malnutrition, and asthma are more common among homeless children than the general population. Homeless children have lower rates of school attendance, and in one study of preschoolers, 43% of homeless children manifested serious developmental delays. (NAS, 1988)

CUTS IN GOVERNMENT PROGRAMS

EXACERBATE FAMILY HOUSING PROBLEMS

Among all of the federal cuts in low-income programs during the 1980s, reductions in housing assistance have been the most severe. Programs for first-time moderate and middle-income home buyers have also been reduced.

- In 1980, states and local agencies distributed $10.5 billion in subsidized, low interest loans to first-time buyers through the Mortgage Revenue Bond Program; in 1989, it is estimated that this program will allocate only $2.0 billion. (CRS, 1988)

- 5.4 million families with incomes at or below the poverty level receive no federal housing assistance. (Apgar, 1988)

- In 1987, the demand for assisted housing increased an average of 25%. Waiting lists for government-assisted housing have been closed in over half of major U.S. cities including San Francisco, Chicago, Kansas City, Minneapolis, Nashville, and Providence. (USCM, 1987)

- Appropriations for federally subsidized housing dropped from $30 billion in FY 1981 to less than $8 billion in FY 1988, an 80% decline after adjusting for inflation. (CBPP, 1988)

EDUCATION

SCHOOL DROPOUT RATES HIGH;

YOUTHS LACK BASIC SKILLS

In 1988, between 750,000-950,000, or 25% of U.S. high school students left public schools without graduating. In 1987, 700,000 students graduated but were as deficient in basic skills and work habits as most dropouts.

- Between now and the year 2000, one in seven of today's preschoolers is at risk of dropping out of school. (CDF, 1987)

- One in four high school dropouts is unemployed. Between 1973-1986, young people who did not complete high school suffered a 42% drop in annual earnings in constant 1986 dollars. (BLS, 1988; W.T. Grant Foundation, 1988)

- Each year's class of school dropouts costs the nation more than $240 billion in lost earnings and foregone taxes over their lifetimes. (Catterall, 1985)

- Only 50% of high school seniors read at levels considered adequate for performing moderately complex tasks, and 80% have inadequate writing skills. In 1980, among high school sophomores, 1 million blacks, whites, and Hispanics had inadequate skills. (CED, 1987; Hispanic Policy Development Project, 1986)

- More than 75% of all poor youths have below average basic skills, and almost 50% are in the bottom fifth of basic skills because of poor reading and math skills. (CDF, 1988)

EARLY INTERVENTION PROGRAMS COST EFFECTIVE

BUT TOO FEW CHILDREN PARTICIPATE

Investing in early intervention and prevention programs improves academic and social achievement and is cost effective. Nevertheless, millions of children who could benefit most still fail to receive these services.

- Every $1.00 invested in quality preschool education returns $6.00 in savings because of lower costs of special education, public assistance, and crime. Head Start, the comprehensive preschool program for low-income 3- to 5-year-olds, reaches less than 20% of the 2.5 million children who are eligible. (CYF, 1988)

- Chapter 1, the primary federal education program for disadvantaged children, costs $750 annually per child, compared with $3,700 annually for a student repeating a grade. Yet, it reaches only 54% of low-income school-age children. (CYF, 1988; CDF, 1987)

FEDERAL FUNDS FOR EDUCATION SLASHED

Federal funds for education have been severely cut in the 1980s, reducing the nation's ability to educate it's most vulnerable citizens.

- The federal contribution to the nation's public schools was 6% in FY 1986, down from 9% in FY 1980. (Census, 1988)
- After adjusting for inflation, federal funding for Compensatory Education (Chapter I) decreased 7.2% from FY 1981-FY 1988. (CBPP, 1988)
- The Federal government's actual spending for all education activities decreased, in real terms, by 12% between FY 1980-FY 1988. (CYF, 1988)

HEALTH

MILLIONS OF CHILDREN

UNPROTECTED BY HEALTH INSURANCE

While the poorest children remain the most vulnerable to poor health, living in a working family no longer assures that children will be protected by health insurance. Families are more likely to forego preventive health care or even medically necessary treatments when they lack health insurance coverage. Families with chronically ill children face impoverishment if there is no insurance to protect them against catastrophic health costs.

- In 1986, over 12 million children had neither public nor private health insurance, an increase of 25% since 1982. Almost 87% of uninsured children live in families with one or more employed adults. (EBRI, 1988)

- In 1986, less than one-half of all children in poverty under age 13 were covered by Medicaid. One-third of all children in families with incomes below the poverty level had no insurance of any kind. (OTA, 1988; EBRI, 1988)

- Uninsured low-income children receive 40-50% less physician and hospital care than do low-income children with health insurance. (Rosenbaum, 1987).

U.S. INFANT DEATH RATE AMONG HIGHEST IN INDUSTRIALIZED WORLD

Contrary to widely held beliefs, U.S. children are not among the healthiest in the world. Among 21 industrialized nations, the U.S. ranks last in its infant mortality rate.

- In 1986, 38,891 infants under age 1 died, an infant mortality rate (IMR) of 10.4. The black rate is twice that of white infants. (NCHS, 1987)

- Since 1980, improvement in the IMR has slowed to such an extent that the U.S. Surgeon General's goal of reducing the IMR to 9.0 by 1990 will not be reached. (OTA, 1988)

LACK OF PRENATAL CARE

INCREASES RISK OF NEWBORN DEATH

Early, comprehensive prenatal care reduces the incidence of low birthweight, the greatest predictor of infant mortality and childhood disability, and saves over $3 for every $1 invested. Yet, each year, at least 1.3 million women receive insufficient prenatal care.

- Every year since 1979, nearly one out of four women did not receive care in the critical first 3 months of pregnancy. In 1986, 21% of white mothers and 38% of black mothers did not receive their first prenatal care visit in the first trimester. (NCHS, 1988)

- Low birthweight babies (under 5.5 pounds) are 40 times more likely to die in the first month of life than normal weight babies. In 1984, the proportions of both low and very low birthweight babies were three to six times higher for mothers who received no prenatal care compared with mothers who received any prenatal care. (IOM, 1986; NCHS, 1987)

- Newborns whose mothers had no prenatal care are almost five times more likely to die than babies born to mothers who had early prenatal care. (Alan Guttmacher Institute, 1987)

GROWING NUMBER OF PRESCHOOLERS NOT IMMUNIZED

Eradication of the major childhood illnesses is among the most significant medical breakthroughs of this century. Yet, growing numbers of nonimmunized preschoolers threaten a return of communicable disease outbreaks that may seriously affect children's health as well as the health of the general public.

- In 1985, the percentage of children ages 1-4 not immunized against major childhood diseases ranged from 26% for rubella to 13% for diphtheria, tetanus and pertussis (DTP). (CYF, 1988)

- From 1980-1985, the proportion of infants under age 1 not fully immunized against DTP increased 9% for all races, and 67% for nonwhite infants. For 2-year-olds, the percentage inadequately immunized against DTP, polio, mumps, measles and rubella increased significantly during this period, ranging from 6.6% for mumps to 35% for rubella. (CDF, 1987)

- The percentage of U.S. infants under age 1 fully immunized against DTP is less than one-half the percentage immunized in the United Kingdom, Canada, Sweden, France, Spain, Italy, and Israel. (OTA, 1988)

FEDERAL CHILD HEALTH PROGRAMS

SERVE FEW WHO ARE ELIGIBLE

Child health prevention programs have proven their effectiveness in saving lives as well as dollars. Yet federal expenditures have only permitted a small percentage of those eligible to be served, with no or little improvement in the last 8 years.

- Federal funds for public health programs, including the Maternal and Child Health Block Grant, Community and Migrant Health Centers, Immunizations and Health Care for the Homeless were reduced 5% between FY 1981-FY 1988, after adjusting for inflation. (CBPP, 1988)

- The WIC (Women, Infants, and Children) nutrition program still serves less than 50% of the low-income, high-risk eligible population. (CYF, 1988)

- In FY 1979, federal immunization grants to states totaled $25 million and 17.4 million doses of vaccine were purchased. In FY 1986, grants totaled $45 million, yet only 16.2 million doses could be purchased due to inflation. (CDF, 1987)

CHILDREN, YOUTH AND FAMILIES IN CRISIS

ABUSE, ADDICTION INCREASING AMONG FAMILIES

Nearly 1.6 million children were abused or neglected in 1986 -- up 150% since 1980. Over 2 million women are battered every year -- one in twelve while pregnant. Widespread family violence is only one of the signals that many families are in crisis.

- Seven million children under 18 live with an alcoholic parent(s). These children are four times more likely to develop alcoholism than are children of non-alcoholics. (NCA, 1986)

- An estimated 6 million Americans need drug abuse treatment. Among the 18.3 million adult heavier drinkers, 12.1 million have one or more symptoms of alcoholism, an increase of 8.2% since 1980. (NAC, 1988; NIAAA, 1985)

- After years of decline, 276,000 children were in foster care in 1985 -- up 2.6% from 1983. On a one day count in June 1986, an estimated 375,000 children were in foster care. (HHS, 1988; CYF, 1988)

LIMITED SERVICES JEOPARDIZE WELL-BEING OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

Millions of vulnerable youth and families who seek needed services cannot obtain them because of insufficient resources devoted to human services programs.

- The majority of the 1.6 million children abused in 1986 did not receive child protective services because of the inadequacy of allocated resources. (HHS, 1988)
- For every battered woman sheltered nationwide, two are turned away due to lack of space. Only 1,200 shelters for battered women exist across the U.S. (NCADV, 1986)
- Only 250,000 slots -- 148,000 of which are for intravenous drug abusers -- are available for the estimated 6 to 6.5 million persons in need of drug treatment. (NAC, 1988)
- In Illinois, between 1983-1987, the number of licensed foster homes dropped 72%, from 7,007 to 2,790. In New York City, adoptive homes were found for only 650 of the 1,200 children needing placements. (Illinois Department of Children and Family Services, 1986; CDF, 1988; New York City Human Resources Administration, 1987)

VIOLENCE, DELINQUENCY MAJOR PROBLEMS AMONG YOUTH

Violence and drug abuse pose serious threats to our Nation's youth. According to the Justice Department, homicide is a leading cause of death among 15- to 24-year-olds in the United States.

- Despite a recent decline in drug use among high school seniors, 57% of the senior class of 1987 had tried an illicit drug, and over a third had tried an illicit drug other than marijuana. (University of Michigan, Institute for Social Research, 1988)

- Between 1980-1985, the suicide rate among youths aged 15-19 increased 18%. Among 15- to 24-year-olds, suicide is the second leading cause of death. (NCHS, 1986; CDC, 1986)

- Forty-nine cities nationwide have reported street gangs dealing in narcotics. (DEA, 1988)

- The number of juveniles arrested for violent crimes increased 9% between 1984-1986, despite an overall decrease in juvenile crime. The recent increase in violent juvenile crime follows a 20% decline between 1974-1984. (DOJ, Uniform Crime Reports, 1974-1986)

- An estimated 35% of arrested juveniles in the District of Columbia, 42% in Maricopa County (Phoenix), Arizona, and 35% in Tampa, Florida, test positive for illicit drug use. The number of juvenile arrestees testing positive for cocaine in the District of Columbia increased from almost none in 1984 to 22% in 1987. (NIJ, 1988; District of Columbia Pretrial Services Agency, 1988)

FUNDING DECLINES FOR YOUTH, FAMILIES IN CRISIS

Despite a growing need, federal support for programs to assist at-risk and troubled youth and families has dropped significantly.

- The FY 1988 appropriation for the Alcohol, Drug Abuse and Mental Health Block Grant, the primary mechanism for federal support to state substance abuse and mental health service efforts, is $32.1 million lower than FY 1981 levels. (CRS, 1988)

- From 1980-1986, federal support for drug abuse services declined by approximately 40%. Persons seeking drug treatment in many cities face waiting lists of up to 6-18 months. (NAC, 1988; National Association of State Alcohol and Drug Abuse Directors, 1988)

- Since FY 1981, the Title XX Social Services Block Grant appropriation has experienced an overall cut of 32%, after adjusting for inflation. (CBPP, 1988)

- Between 1981-1985, resources to aid abused children grew less than 2% nationwide. In over one-half of the states, resources fell or failed to keep pace with the demand for services. (CYF, 1987)

- Between FY 1980-FY 1988, Chapter I education funding for neglected and delinquent youth fell by more than 8%. (OMB Watch, 1988)

- Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act funds were reduced by one-third between 1980-1988. (OMB Watch, 1988)

GLOSSARY OF SOURCES

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[BLS]	Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor
[CBO]	Congressional Budget Office
[CBPP]	Center on Budget and Policy Priorities
[CDC]	Centers for Disease Control, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
[CDF]	Children's Defense Fund
[CED]	Committee for Economic Development
[Census]	Bureau of the Census, U.S. Department of Commerce
[CRS]	Congressional Research Service, Library of Congress
[CYF]	Select Committee on Children, Youth, and Families, U.S. House of Representatives
[DEA]	Drug Enforcement Agency, U.S. Department of Justice
[DOJ]	U. S. Department of Justice
[DOL]	U. S. Department of Labor
[EBRI]	Employee Benefits Research Institute
[HCFA]	Health Care Financing Administration, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
[HHS]	U. S. Department of Health and Human Services
[IOM]	Institute of Medicine, National Academy of Sciences
[JCHS]	Joint Center on Housing Studies, Harvard University
[JEC]	Joint Economic Committee, U.S. Congress
[MIT]	Massachusetts Institute of Technology
[NAC]	Select Committee on Narcotics Abuse and Control, U.S. House of Representatives
[NAS]	National Academy of Sciences
[NCADV]	National Coalition Against Domestic Violence
[NCA]	National Council on Alcoholism
[NCHS]	National Center for Health Statistics, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
[NIAAA]	National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
[NIJ]	National Institute of Justice, U.S. Department of Justice
[OTA]	Office of Technology Assessment
[USCM]	U. S. Conference of Mayors
[USDA]	U. S. Department of Agriculture

*The sources listed in this report are available in more detail at the Select Committee on Children, Youth, and Families.

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